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We Must Ask and Answer Questions

by ROBERT MAJOR

THERE are still 5 million unemployed registered in America, production and foreign trade are still lagging behind last year's figures, but I read, the recession is over, because inventories are reduced, business is booming, stock prices reached new heights. Happy are most Americans, they managed again to evade the necessity of asking and answering the basic questions our movement is continuously asking and trying to answer. Such things they can defer again to the next or second next recession.

But we must continue to ask searching questions of ourselves as well as others for unasked questions remain unanswered. Our questions must go beyond mere technicalities which absorbed the attention of politicians and business experts in the recession. We do not minimize technicalities, we know that monetary policy, interest

rates, inventories, stock exchange margins are relevant issues. We did not deride advertising men vowing still hotter campaigns, salesmen promising still harder selling. We were not disinterested in Democratic-Republican quarrels about responsibility for the slump.

But we had and we have to consider the recession, which has shaken the complacency in existing conditions of many people, as an opportunity to find more people who would listen to our more basic and relevant questions—and to our answers. There are possibly more people now than one year earlier who will understand that it is at least as important, as selling techniques, to know that in a slump year the average price of farm land increased six per cent—and why it was and what it means for the country. What it means when the taxpayers

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have to bear the extra billions for the development of missiles, while at Cape Canaveral where some of these missiles are launched, land prices soared 60 times in three years.

When countless billions must be spent for new superhighways—out of taxes and tolls—while in the last six years prices of land, adjacent to them, soared ten to two hundred /200!/ times over their former appraisal value. When, chiefly as a result of such increases, the mortgage debt of individuals rose from 13,100 million to 107,600 million dollars from 1945 to 1957. Now, perhaps, bankers and businessmen will better understand that such things cannot be remedied by mere financial wizardry. Now, perhaps, some hitherto indifferent persons would meditate what it means for their well being when in a few years new billionaires were produced in Texas whose own productive activity has been nothing else than having occupied sites of exploitation early enough.

Thus, we must assume, more people will listen to us when we tell

them that in a recession—whether we have really passed it or not—that the issue is not just a restoration of the *status quo*, of business as usual, of restoring to each branch of industry, each corporation, each employee their former maximal gross sales, profits and wages respectively—because under the present conditions a just distribution of national wealth and income is impossible. We must tell them louder than ever that the logical goal must be the elimination of the real causes of injustice, inequalities, recessions, slumps and depressions; tell them that what America, like any other country, needs, is not temporary remedies, but radical reforms, to secure free accession for all to the wealth of nature and full, undiminished enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor; to prevent private profiteering through occupation and monopolization of places and natural resources, to diminish step by step and finally abolish taxes punishing production, and to collect the community-created value of land for community benefit.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THESE CONFERENCES

Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Henry George School of Social Science—Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, July 9-12, 1959.

Tenth International Conference on Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade—Hanover, W. Germany, July 25 to August 1, 1959.